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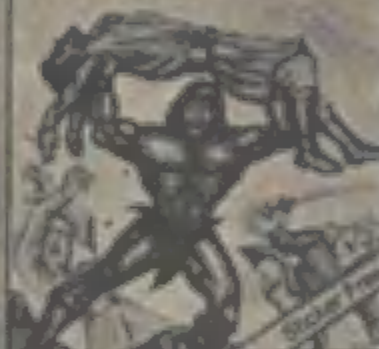
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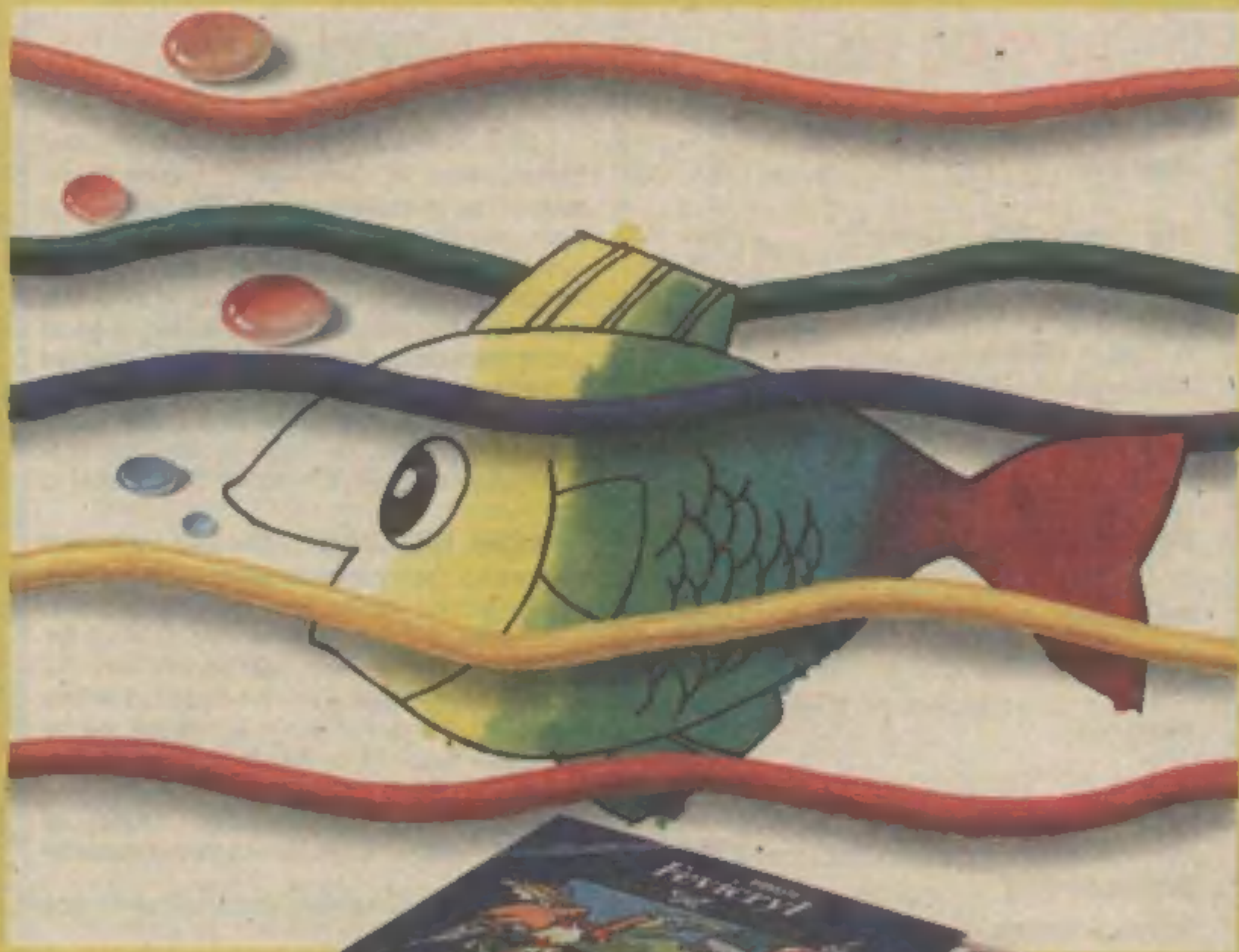
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**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

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THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE: King

Pratapavarma of Maninagar proceeds to the northern parts of the kingdom. The tribals living there, who are seeing their king for the first time, give the royal visitors a grand welcome. Their enthusiasm turns into anxiety when he tells them of the calamity that has overtaken the kingdom and of the monster, who presumably is attracted by the flower that has bloomed after several years. As none in the kingdom can be a match to the monster in prowess, he has to be distracted from the kingdom by taking a bunch of "Shatabdika" to him.

VEER HANUMAN: Now that Lord Indra has sent his chariot and charioteer to Rama, he is on even ground with Ravana. The battle between them rages. Each of them is able to meet the arrows sent by the other with equally powerful arrows. Sage Aditya gives the secret of Aditya ~~mantra~~ to Rama. Ravana is beheaded, but he gets a new head! All ten heads fall to the ground one after another.

BEGINNING a new feature - "Artists of Modern India" - **Plus** all your favourite features.

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Befriending Books

There is so much talk these days about the reading habit—especially in children. Here are some interesting facts: India is the eighth largest book publishing country in the world. That does not mean, the average Indian is a voracious reader. He reads less than 35 pages a year, or 10,000 words, if a page has, say, 300 words! After a survey done in all the literate countries, the UNESCO recommends not less than 2,000 pages (10 books of 200 pages each?) per year!

How do children fare with the printed word? Not altogether bad, one should say. It has been revealed that some 40 per cent of the nearly 740,000 schools in India maintain libraries. Those who do not have library facilities are mostly primary schools and institutions run by village panchayats, municipalities and, in a few cases, by corporations and even governments. Such schools do not have sufficient finances to run libraries or have facilities to locate a library. Let's forget them for the time being, and consider the question whether the existing libraries in schools are being put to good use—by the students.

If the libraries have adequate number of books to go round, and if they are being made available to the students, nothing should prevent them from borrowing the books and reading them! Some schools have even a library hour once a week or more often. Children are also advised to maintain a record of the books they borrow from the library and encouraged to write their views, which they come to remember and value later in life. No compulsion is called for to urge students to read books. It is very easy to inculcate the reading habit in children, *provided* they are given an access to books! It will, therefore, be the responsibility of school libraries to make children befriend books.

Schools have reopened; the new academic session is on. It's time to think of books and reading them!



AFRICA'S 52ND STATE



On May 28, Eritrea was admitted to the United Nations as its 182nd member. Just four days earlier, at midnight on Sunday, May 23, thousands of jubilant Eritreans sang and danced in the streets of capital Asmara, as the country formally proclaimed independence from Ethiopia, whose northernmost province it was till then.

Eritrea had a chequered history. It was a part of the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia, claimed to be the oldest country in the world. That was in the 7th century. In the middle of the 16th century, it fell to the Turks. In 1889, it became an Italian colony and was used as his base when the Italian dictator, Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia in 1936, dethroning Emperor Haile Selassie, who then took refuge in Britain. Soon after the Second World War started in 1939, the Allies freed Ethiopia and returned it to the Emperor. Eritrea became an autonomous part of Ethiopia in 1941.

Soon the region saw the rise of secessionist movements, which took the form of a civil war, especially after the Emperor was

deposed in a military coup in 1974. Most of Eritrea was by then in the hands of guerrillas who were leading the liberation movement, which witnessed sporadic warfare with the Ethiopian troops for almost 30 years. Ultimately, capital Asmara fell to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) on May 24, 1991. Though Eritrea had a *de facto* independent existence, it waited for exactly two years to declare independence.

And this came about a month after the April 23-25 referendum, in which nearly 99.8 per cent voters said 'yes' for ■ final separation from Ethiopia. The National Assembly then met to elect Issaias Afeworki, who had led the EPLF guerrillas to victory in the civil war, as President.

The 134-member National Assembly, which includes 30 elected representatives from Eritrea's ten provinces, will soon have 20 prominent people and 10 women's representatives chosen by the leadership. The Assembly will hold power for four years, during which time ■ commission will prepare ■ new constitution for the country—the 52nd in Africa.

Eritrea's population is nearly 3,500,000 of whom Christians and Muslims ■■■ evenly divided.

The former are dominant in the EPLF. President Afeworki referred to the "moment of joy and resurrection for Eritrea" and called upon other countries to help rebuild his young nation.

It was 28-year-old Saad Mohamed, a veteran of the civil war, who raised Eritrea's new flag on May 23. He wore simple khaki shorts, plastic sandals, and a bush hat. "I fought eight solid years for this moment. I feel very proud and joyful," he said.

Women on Everest

Who is the first woman to climb the Everest? Junko Tabei, of Japan. Who is the first Indian woman to reach the peak? Bachendri Pal. Who is the first woman in the world to climb the Everest twice? We now have the answer: Santosh Yadav. A member of the Indo-Nepalese women's Everest Expedition 1993, she achieved this world record on May 10. She was not alone at the 8,848 metre high peak that day. Two other Indian women—Kung Bhutia and Dicky Dolma—were with her. Santosh Yadav climbed the peak for the first time in 1992. The achievement of the three Indians marks the first all-women expedition to Everest. The Expedition, led by Bachendri Pal, recorded another achievement within a week. On May 16, four more Indian women stood on the Everest—Dipu Sharma, Radha Devi, Suman Kutiya, and Savitha Martoliya. A Nepalese sherpa, Ang Rita, who is a member of a Spanish Expedition climbing the peak from another approach, got on to the top on May 16—for the ninth time. He first stood on the Everest in 1983, and repeated the feat in 1984, 1985, 1987, twice in 1988, 1990 and 1992. Now, that record will not be beaten so easily!



A Hoarding in Space

Balloons conveying a message or publicizing a product are not uncommon these days. When they float up in the skies, floating from the highest rooftop possible, no pair of eyes can fail to notice them. Well, that is their objective. Soon, billboards—a mile long—will be hung from space, if the plans of a private company in the U.S.A. materialise! Some "protestors" have already described them as "horrifying". They cannot imagine such billboards advertising "hamburgers and beer"! Watch for them, anyway.

'Strike' by striking clock

The chimes of 'Big Ben' in Westminster, London, are world famous. It has separate bells to strike at 15 minutes, 30 minutes, and 45 minutes of the hour



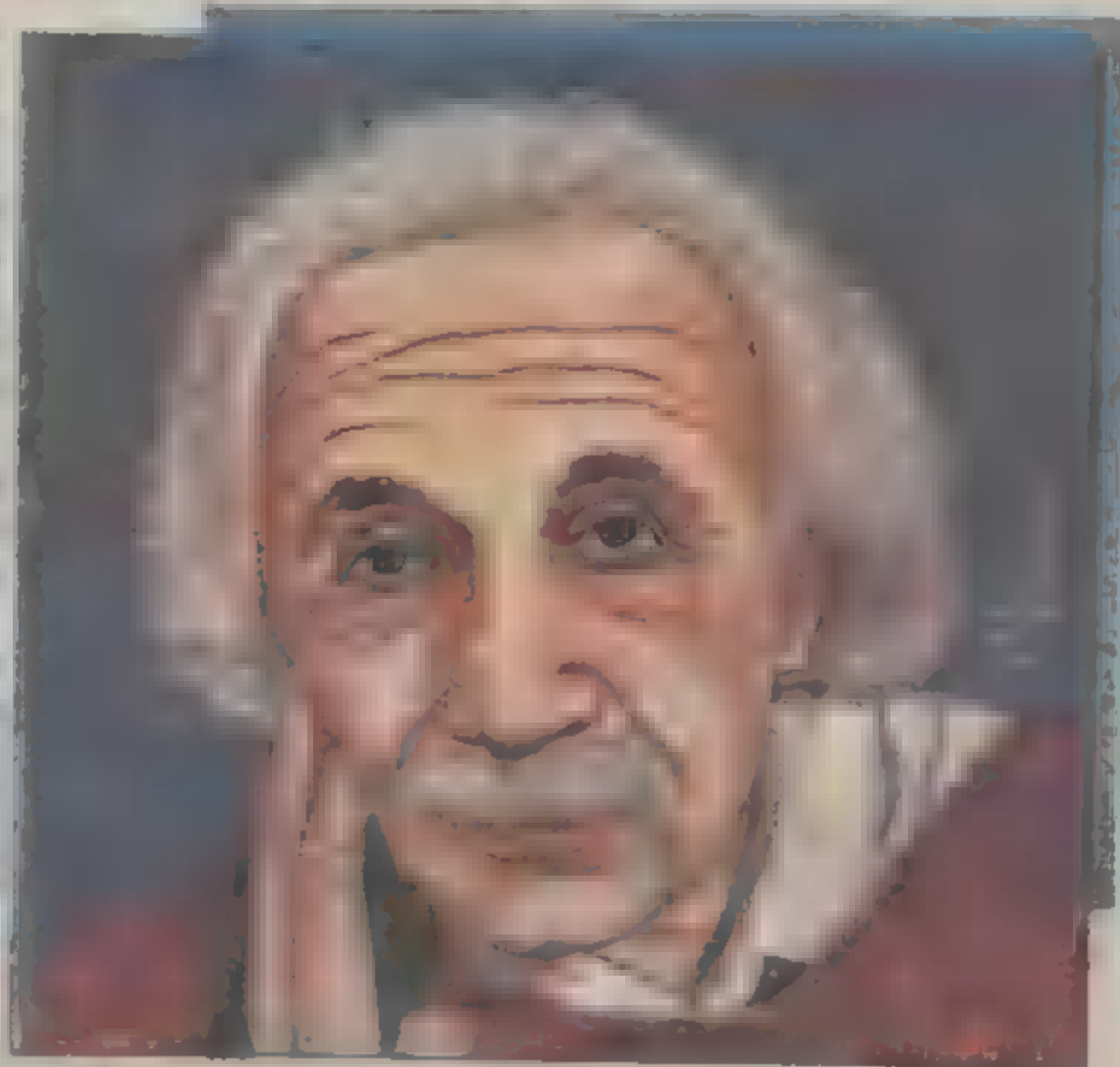
and the main chimes at full hour. Recently, for eight weeks, the quarter-hour bells did not ring; a gear-wheel needed replacement. After that, Big Ben 'sounded' chimingly

happy, but on May 19, two weeks after the repair, the famous clock struck work! No chimes were heard between 6.11 and 9.25 p.m. The engineers did not know why the clock had stopped but to their great relief, the mechanism restored on its own!

A SURPRISE FOR EINSTEIN

Those were days when Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* **had** caught the imagination of scientists **and** intellectuals, **and** he was besieged with invitations to explain it to audiences at every possible institution.

One day, he was being driven to a university for a lecture. He heard his chauffeur say, "Sir, I must have by now listened to your lecture almost thirty times, if not more," and adding with a chuckle, "you may not believe me, but I can repeat it word by word."



Einstein (1879-1955), who was relaxing in his **chair** behind,

he sat up. "Is that so, Philip? I'll give you a chance!" It **was** **that** **the** the lecture another day, Philip would put **on** Einstein's **clothes** and **play** **the** the physicist while Einstein would act **as** chauffeur **and** drive **him** to **the** venue!

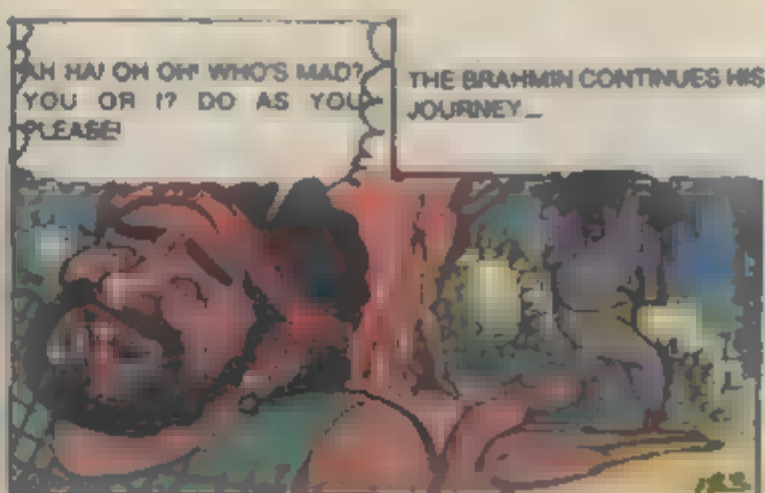
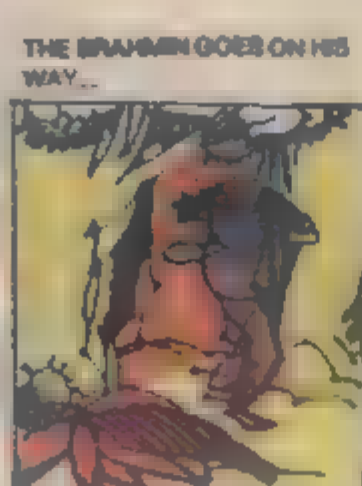
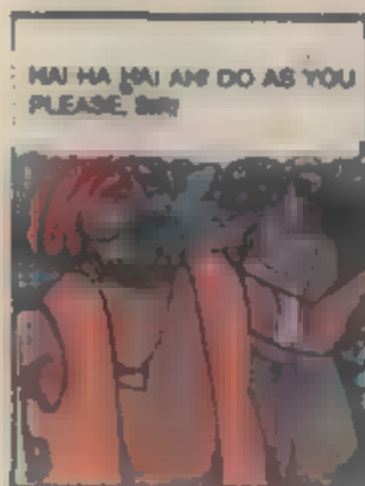
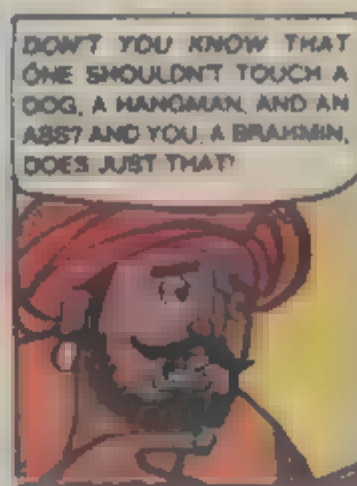
Fortunately, none among the organisers had an occasion **to** meet Einstein personally. They received the gentleman who got out of the back **and** **the** driver opened the door and held it for him.

Philip took the stage, while Einstein occupied a chair at the back of the hall. The lecture began. Just as he had claimed, Philip did not falter, nor did he fail in recalling the correct words and sentences. Einstein suppressed his surprise **and** was full of admiration for Philip.

He concluded the lecture **and** said, "Any questions?" though he thought his lecture **was** lucid enough so as not to elicit any doubt. No. One person among the audience had a question to ask. Philip listened to him patiently and, without batting an eyelid, said, "That's simple, my good friend. In fact, it's **so** simple **that** I **can** ask **my** chauffeur there **to** explain it to you." He then signalled to Einstein at the back. He went up the stage and cleared the professor's doubt.

Later, as they drove back—with Einstein still **in** the wheel—he complimented his driver. "That was well done, Philip. You've a very good memory. **For** the way you tackled **the** professor's question showed **such** quick thinking. Congratulations!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Philip, as he jumped out of the car to open the door for Einstu



It is the most important of all virtues not to do any harm to any one knowingly, even if he be a lowly person, at any time (Thirukkural)

AS HE WALKS STILL
FURTHER, ANOTHER

O LEARNED SIR! WHY
THIS UNHOLY DEED?

EHI!



A
YOUR SHOULDER? NO! NO!

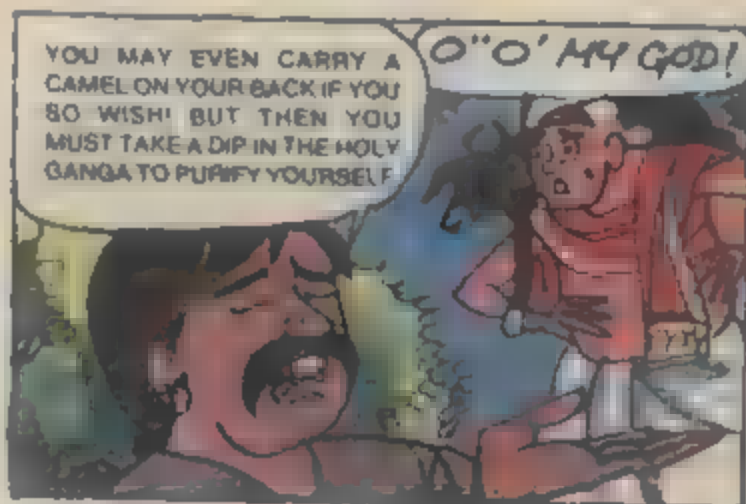


WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
DON'T TALK RUBBISH!

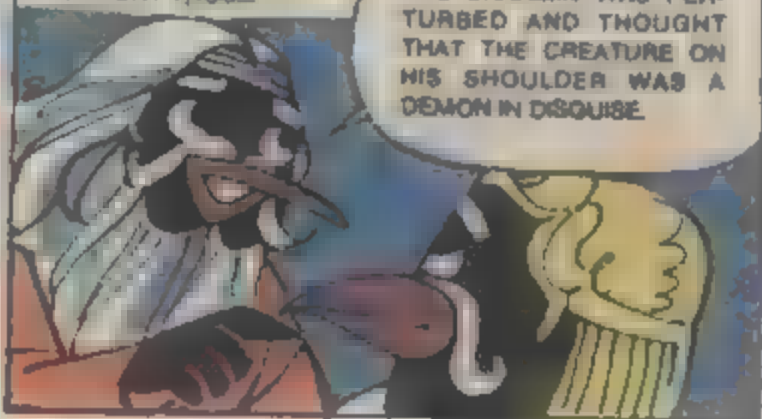


YOU MAY EVEN CARRY A
CAMEL ON YOUR BACK IF YOU
SO WISH! BUT THEN YOU
MUST TAKE A DIP IN THE HOLY
GANGA TO PURIFY YOURSELF.

O'O' MY GOD!



THE OLD CROW CONCLUDES
THE STORY THUS...



THE BRAHMIN WAS PER-
TURBED AND THOUGHT
THAT THE CREATURE ON
HIS SHOULDER WAS A
DEMON IN DISGUISE.

SO, HE THREW IT AWAY AND
RAN BACK TO HIS VILLAGE IN
PANIC!

THE ROGUES CAUGHT
THE GOAT AND HAD A
SUMPTUOUS FEAST!



LIKEWISE, WE TOO WILL FOOL
OUR ENEMY. I'LL NOW TELL
YOU WHAT WE SHOULD DO

PLEASE TELL US, SIR!



Wise men do not, even with a hope for profit, undertake a job if they know that it will affect their principal investment.

HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?
FOOL THEM, OI LEARNED
SIR?



LISTEN CAREFULLY.



CATCH HOLD OF ME AS IF BY
FORCE: BEAT ME AND SMEAR
BLOOD ON MY BODY, AND

DRIVE ME OUT OF
YOUR TERRITORY



THE ENEMY'S SPIES
FEEL THAT YOU
BETRAYED YOU AND BEEN
DRIVEN OUT OF
KINGDOM

AND THEN?



YOU SHOULD SHIFT YOUR
BASE FROM THIS PLACE TO
YOUR NEW BASE



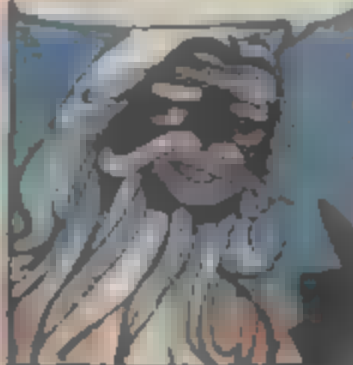
MEANWHILE, I'LL WIN THE
ENEMY'S CONFIDENCE
AND FIND OUT WHERE
THEY DWELL



HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?



DON'T YOU KNOW
OWLS ARE BLIND DURING
THE DAY?



I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO!



DON'T WORRY, JUST FOL-
LOW MY PLAN.

He who prefers labour to pleasure will be a pillar to his relations and
will wipe away their sorrows.

AFTER SOME TIME, THE OLD CROW UNFOLDS HIS DRAMA.



YOU'RE NOT WORTHY TO BE A KING, YOU'RE DULL AND HEADSTRONG!

WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU TALKING? TRAITOR!



MEANWHILE, TWO OWLS WATCH.



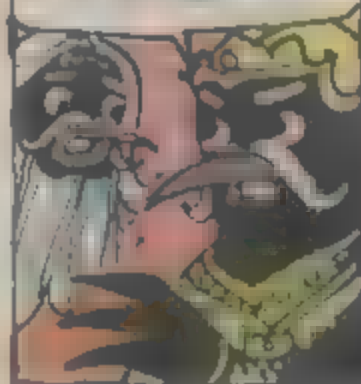
THERE'S SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING GOING ON AMONG THE CROWS. LET'S WATCH!

THE ATTENDANTS OF THE SHOW-KING RUSH TO THE SPOT AND ~~THE~~ THE OLD CROW.



YOU TRAITOR! WE'LL ~~SEE~~ YOU!

STAY AWAY! DON'T KILL HIM! I SHALL PUNISH THE RASCAL MYSELF.



HE SHOULD LIVE A MISERABLE LIFE!



MEGHAVARNA PRETENDS TO PECK AT THE OLD CROW.



YOU TRAITOR!

To Continue

Hatred is the greatest misery; if destroyed, it will result in the greatest delight.

IT'S NOT THE POT THAT'S LUCKY!

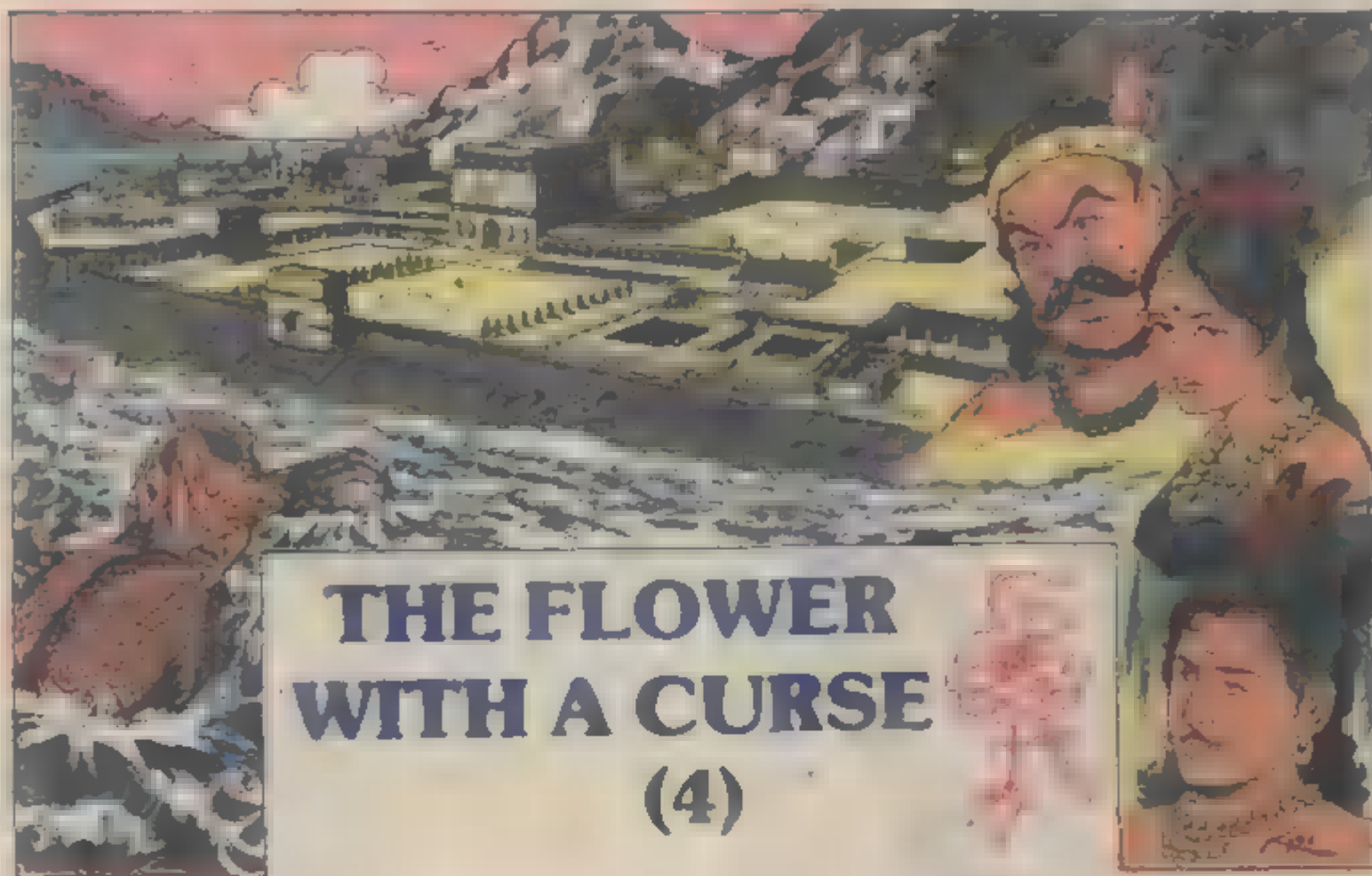
Mohan Karmarkar, of Solapur, was coming out of the theatre after watching a movie, when he met his friend Ranganekar and his wife. As he had got in after the lights had been switched off, he did not know that the couple, too, was in the theatre. He accompanied them till the car park and was about to bid them good-bye when his friend said, "Why don't you come home and have dinner with us?" Mohan tried to excuse himself, but Ranganekar would not listen to any of that. Ultimately, he too got into the car.

As Ranganekar reversed into the main road, his wife told Mohan, "I'm afraid you'll have to take pot luck!" Mohan wondered what she was trying to tell him. Was she going to serve him in a pot? Later, when he sat for dinner, he found that Asha had laid everything properly, but was very apologetic. "Nothing special, Mohan. Today



you'll have to eat whatever I've cooked, whatever is in the pot!" "To take (one's) pot luck" is an informal way of saying, one has to take a chance and accept whatever is given, without an advance knowledge of the quality or quantity.

Jyotiranjana Biswal, of Durgapur, wants to know the meaning of 'to give chapter and verse'. While explaining something, you may sometimes quote an author or refer to a book or an authority by mentioning the particular chapter, the page number, or the numbered para or section, so as to impress that you are not entirely depending on your memory, imagination, or commonsense. However, very often this expression is used in a negative sense: "Don't give me chapter and verse; just tell me what it all means roughly/simply." The expression probably originated from the practice by Christian priests quoting from the Bible "chapter and verse", while delivering their sermons.



THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE (4)

(The soldiers sent to the southern parts of Maninagar, to guard the villages abandoned by the people who have fled to different parts of the kingdom, including the capital, report the sighting of a monster. Captain Veer Singh rushes to Commander Gambhir Singh with details of the havoc caused by the 'devil'. King Pratapavarma is not convinced. Monsters are mythological characters, he reminds the Commander, who decides to verify the truth of the soldiers' story.)

It was when Gambhir Singh was getting ready to take a round of the places where the people who had fled from the southern parts of the kingdom had been billeted in the capital that Captain Veer Singh went to him and told him of the appearance of a monster the previous night, destroying everything in its way, and pre-

sumably heading towards the north.

The Commander decided to meet King Pratapavarma immediately. After directing Veer Singh to await further news of and from the soldiers who, on finding themselves to be no match to the monster, had run away for their lives, Gambhir

NONE TO MATCH A MONSTER



Singh straight away went to the palace.

"A monster? But that's preposterous!" remarked Pratapa-varma after Gambhir Singh had narrated to him the happenings of the previous night. "How ~~can~~ there be any monsters in *this* age? One has heard of them only in mythology and legends! It's true whole villages have been destroyed without any warning or any trace of who or what mysterious power ~~was~~ responsible for it. But, to attribute it to any *monster* is ridiculous, Gambhir Singh! How much ~~can~~ ~~can~~ depend

on the soldiers? After all, your captain has not seen the monster himself."

"Your Majesty, I fully agree with you," said the Commander. "Veer Singh has, of course, seen only the devastated villages. And by all descriptions, the havoc is not any natural calamity. When some of the soldiers, too, became victims and mysteriously disappeared, the others must have surmised that it was ~~the~~ the work of something, which they have described it simply ~~as~~ a monster. If you'll permit me, Your Majesty, I propose to proceed to the south in the evening and stay put there for the night. It'll be better if I gather some firsthand information."

"I was about to suggest that, Gambhir Singh," the king approved of the Commander's plan. "I only hope, you too won't come back with the ~~news~~ of some monster!"

Before he left the palace, Commander Gambhir Singh went up to its western side where the women and children had been put up. On seeing him, the guards ~~in~~ duty came forward and saluted him. One of them said,

"Everything is all right, sir, we've had no problem. The princess ~~was~~ some time ago, and I presume she's going round the place."

Gambhir Singh dismounted, leaving the horse to the charge of one of the soldiers, and entered the pillared passage to the main hall. From one of the ~~rooms~~ Princess Priyamvada came out, accompanied by two maids.

"Everything is going smooth, Commander Gambhir Singh," said the princess. "I've asked the court physician to take a look at the children. Not that there has been any complaint, but we should not take anything for granted."

"True princess, let's make sure of everything," responded Gambhir Singh. "After all, the women will be worried, and it's only natural."

As soon as ~~he~~ reached home, the Commander sent for Captain Veer Singh. "Any further news of the soldiers?"

"A few of them have returned to the capital with injuries, sir," reported Veer Singh. "They are all being attended to by our doctors. More than the injuries, they seem to have had the scare of their lives. They only speak of the monster!"

"If what they say is true, Captain," observed the Commander, "the kingdom is facing a





grave threat. Not that I want to disbelieve their reports, but we've to decide whether the threat is something which our army can't meet by itself or whether we've to seek the help of others. For that, I've decided to go to the southern parts and look for the so-called monster. Get ready to go with me before evening."

"Yes, sir, I shall keep myself ready," said Veer Singh.

"Let the soldiers deputed for the vigil go separately. We shall take just three soldiers to go with us. You may now go and make the arrangements."

Commander Gambhir Singh, Captain Veer Singh, and the three soldiers started on horseback ■ short while after noon. They reached the southern parts of Maninagar long before sunset, and could see for themselves the devastation that had overtaken the villages there. They came upon the soldiers who had been sent there to guard the ■■ coast and the nearby villages from where the people had fled to safety.

Apparently, none of them was aware of the monster, though they were surprised why none of the previous day's contingent could be ■■■ there when they reached the place. The Commander, as well as Veer Singh did not tell them right then of what had happened in the night. They decided to remain with those guarding the ■■ coast, though ■ little away from them. Both the Commander and the Captain inspected the sandy sea coast thoroughly, keeping ■■ eye for footprints or other marks. They could not find any, except two broad almost parallel lines, as if something had been dragged over the land. The lines stretched

up to the sea at one end and for a considerable distance at the other end. The lines were broken here and there, presumably where once stood dwellings, trees and shrubs.

Suddenly, they saw something like huge footmarks on the wet sand, though faint. They could not make out whether they had been made by any human being or they belonged to a large-sized animal. "It's almost certain that something had come out of the sea and tried to make its way into the interior parts, sir," remarked Captain Veer Singh.

"Perhaps it emerged from the sea and must also have gone back there," said Gambhir Singh. "But do you notice that the lines—almost looking like furrows—go in just one direction—north? The sea coast is open, and whoever or whatever it might have been could have gone east or west, as well."

They scatched for more footprints on the land away from the sea coast, but could not find any. By then, it was slowly getting dark and darker, and they remained alert for any movement. There was not a streak of moonlight, and in the natural

light nothing much was discernible.

It was Veer Singh who spotted what he thought was a huge apparition moving northwards. They went after it, at a distance, to make out its shape and size before deciding to go anywhere near and confront it. The trees in front of them obstructed their view. They could also not see whether it had any legs. Something looking like a head was at times seen above the trees. It was turning this way and that. After a while, the head was held steady. The Commander and the Captain realised that the head was now facing the north. And before they knew what was happening, the figure retraced its steps as if it was on its way back. Now the figure was facing them and the sight sent a shiver through their bones. It was a gigantic figure, as high as a hill. It had two huge arms and legs, and they saw it dragging its feet and not exactly walking. That accounted for the furrows they had seen on the sandy beach. It had also a hideous-looking head, dangling from its shoulders.

Without attracting its attention, Gambhir Singh and Veer



Singh stepped aside from its path. They were certain of ■■■■ thing: none of the soldiers, nor ■■ contingent of the army, or their swords and other weapons would be strong enough to confront the giant and offer a fight or ■■■■ resistance. As they looked bewildered at the size of the figure and its shape, and its uncouth movements, the giant slowly wended its way back to the seafront and entered the sea. Before long, it disappeared in the water as the first light of dawn etched the edges of the rocks and trees.

Gambhir Singh and Veer

Singh guessed that the monster ■■■■ coming out of the sea only at night, and returning to the sea before dawn, and that something ■■■■ attracting it towards the north. The Commander and the Captain then remembered the soldiers stationed there to guard the place and to their horror found some half-a-dozen bodies. Presumably, the soldiers had been taken unawares and were crushed under the feet of the monster. What was strange was, none of them had given out a cry, or a shriek, or a wailing note. They had all met with a silent end. Fortunately, as they later found, the other soldiers, including the three who had accompanied them, did not have a chance to see the monster.

As they themselves rode back to the capital, Commander Gambhir Singh told Captain Veer Singh, "There's ■■■■ point in sacrificing the lives of more soldiers. We can't prevent the monster from following its daily routine. All that had stood in its path ■■■■ already been destroyed, ■■■■ we can only pray that it doesn't venture deeper into the land and cause more

destruction."

"That's only wise, sir," said Veer Singh, "but we've to do something to kill the monster or at least prevent it from entering our kingdom."

"Yes, Veer Singh," said the Commander, "I've been thinking about that. However, I would like to consult the king before I take a decision. So, let's hurry up. By now, some soldiers must have already left for the sea coast. When they come back in the evening, We shall not send any soldiers for the night. I would like you to go there in the morning and look for any fresh traces of the monster's movements tonight."

Commander Gambhir Singh was ushered into the presence of King Pratapavarma and Raj Guru Gourinath. "Was there a monster, Gambhir Singh?" the king asked a point-blank question.

"The soldiers were correct, Your Majesty," said the Commander, and described all that he had seen and experienced. He ended by saying, "I've reached the conclusion that it comes from the sea and goes back to the sea; it emerges only when it is dark

and returns before it is daybreak; it heads for the north and nowhere else; and we don't have ■ giant-killer amongst us."

King Pratapavarma remained pensive while he listened to the Commander's narration. How could he allow his kingdom to be ravaged by a monster? It ■■■ the Raj Guru who came out with a comment. "I'm inclined to believe that the monster ■ none other than Prince Chandramani, who is still living the curse of *pujari* Kulsreshta, and that he is being attracted by the smell of "Shatabdika" which has bloomed in the northern mountains after ■ long gap of time. I think the ■■■ flower must now come to our rescue."

"You ■■■ to say, O most revered Guru," said Pratapavarma unbelievably, "a flower that has brought calamity to our kingdom will also redeem us?"

"I don't say it will, my son," responded Guru Gourinath. "But we may make use of it, because it is the flower that attracts the monster to Maninagar. If someone were to take the flowers into the sea, then the attention of the monster could be diverted and he could be distracted. But how?

And who will...?"

Suddenly it dawned on King Pratapavarma that the only people whom he could rely on might be the Tanghkul tribe of Nungmai hills in the northern parts. And he remembered his promise to visit them—a promise he made when he was introduced to the victorious tribal troupe who bagged several of the prizes and trophies at the competitions held prior to the Holi celebrations. It was the youth Thangal who had presented a bouquet of "Shatabdika" to Princess Priyamvada, and he himself had responded to the gesture by announcing entry for the tribals into the army of Maninagar, besides promising to look them up and to enquire about their welfare.

"I shall go to Nungmai and appeal to the tribe to save the

kingdom," said King Pratapavarma. "Gambhir Singh, you may arrange for my visit. I shall go there even tomorrow. I shall ride a horse to save time. You may stay back in the capital; let your captain escort me. After all, he had earlier gone to Nungmai to collect a sapling and had come back with more flowers for the princess. I will only have a small entourage. O Guru! Wish me success in my mission!"

"My son, Pratapavarma, you've taken the right decision," said Gourinath. "I'm sure there will be many brave young men among the Tanghkuls to come forward and sacrifice their lives for the kingdom. Yes, you should go tomorrow, there's no time to lose. May goddess Lai-rembi be with you."

—To continue



WORLD OF NATURE



Nearest To Man

Gorillas can walk erect like man, but not for a long stretch of time. That is because they have a straight spine—not curved like man's—and they easily get tired and so walk on all fours. The gorilla is an ape—like the Chimpanzee, Gibbon, and the Orang-utan. They are tailless monkeys. The gorilla has 32 teeth—like those of a human being except that its canine teeth are long and sharp. Its hands are like man's—with four fingers pointing in one direction, and the thumb in another. However, its feet are also like hands. The gorilla can pick and hold items just as the fingers do. The gorilla does not like to fight; it scares away hunters and predators by standing up, tearing leaves and branches and throwing them into the air, thumping its strong chest with great sound, and yelling a mighty roar—very similar to the reaction that can be seen in man!

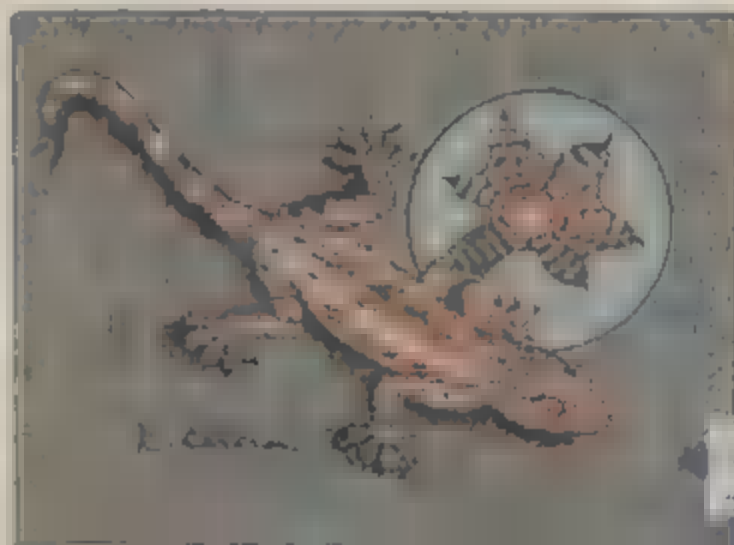
Grass, not a tree

Next time you are quizzed about the tallest grass, don't take time to answer. It is bamboo! A full grown bamboo can reach up to some 35/36

metres. And it is one of the fastest growing plants, too. It can grow more than 40 cm in 24 hours. Some varieties grow more than 1 metre. There are more than a thousand species of bamboo, different in size, shape, and colour. They bloom once in 60, 100, or 120 years, depending on the species, but the same species bloom at the same time, wherever they are. Bamboos are very common in India, Japan, and China.

Hooks on toes

You have often gazed at the lizard in your room clinging to the walls or moving upside down on the smooth ceiling, and wondered what prevents it from falling, haven't you? If you ever see them walk along the glass window on the other side, you may go near and examine their four toes. Their underside may look like a suction pad. But you will also, if you examine closely, see innumerable tiny projections looking like hooks. It is these projections that help the lizard cling to the surface. The hooks have a backward direction, so everytime it takes a step, it has to curl and uncurl the toes, which, then, appear to have a suction movement.





LAZY-BONES

Chinnappa lost his parents when he was just five. They did not leave him much. Periyaswami, who was a wealthy person of that place, took pity on the orphan and brought him home and looked after him. The boy was lazy even when he was young. He was prompt in only eating his meals. Soon he grew into a young man.

One day, Periyaswami called him and said: "Chinnappa, I am becoming old and older day by day. Till now, I've brought you up without giving you an occasion to feel any want. And, I never taught you how to eke out a livelihood. I'm afraid, when I'm gone, my children may not keep you with them. So, I want you to work from today and earn. You begin by watering the plants around this house for two hours every day."

Chinnappa was taken aback, for, the place was full of trees and plants, and it was not an easy task to water all

of them every day. He would only break his back, he feared. At the same time, if he did not work, he might not get any food from the house any longer.

He had come to know of a *sanyasi* staying in the forest. Probably he would be able to tell him how to water the plants without exerting himself. The idiot of a boy, Chinnappa went in search of the *sanyasi*. He was in his ashram. When Chinnappa presented his problem, he understood what was troubling the boy. "Before you start working," the *sanyasi* advised him, "go to that tree and hang yourself upside down—not for one day or two days, but a whole six months. Do you think you can do that?"

Chinnappa nodded his head and proceeded to the tree—only to find that there was already someone hanging upside down! "Oh! So, you too have the same problem as mine?"

How long have you been at this exercise?"

"First untie me, I shall tell you everything after that," said the man. When Chinnappa untied him, he said: "I didn't come here to do *tapas*. Someone brought me here by force, tied me to this tree by my feet, and went away. One night, but that was enough. You've no idea how much my legs were paining! I'm glad you untied me this way. It saved me!"

"You mean to say it is very painful to hang upside down?" Chinnappa could not believe his words. "If last night, you've suffered so much pain, how could one do so for six months at a stretch?"

The man guessed that the youth was a lazy fellow. He thought he could make use of the boy. "Look here! I'm a thief. Would you like to join me? You'll earn enough to buy at least a meal every day. But, if you prefer to spend your time hanging from this tree, let your wish be carried out," he told Chinnappa and was about to leave the place.

Chinnappa thought for a while and decided that it would be better if he went along with the thief, rather than suffer untold pain. He accompanied him to his hideout. The next night, the thief smeared black paint



smeared over Chinnappa's body before they set out from their hideout. They entered a small house and stole whatever money had been kept there. They counted it. "That's good, we've got two hundred rupees! Let's share it half and half. We can pull on for several days," said Chinnappa.

"That may be possible, young man," said the thief with a gleeful smile. "There are other people waiting for their share—like the informer who told me of the house, and of the money I would find there. I must give him fifty rupees. Then there is the watchman of that street; he has to be given fifty rupees. The leader of the



group would get his share, that is another fifty rupees. After I meet all this, what is left will be just fifty rupees. Half of that will be twenty-five rupees. We have also to set apart ten rupees each for our patron deity. We've thus to manage with just fifteen rupees. So, let's spend it carefully and wisely."

Chinnappa then went about wiping himself clean of the black paint. That took more than four hours. If every time he had to waste that much time, thought Chinnappa, it would not be worth the trouble of stealing for a paltry sum of fifteen or ten rupees. Suddenly, he had a brain-

wave. Why not become a policeman, instead? That would not demand much work, he thought. When he met a policeman on the way, he requested him to help him get a policeman's job.

"This is my master's house," said the policeman. "As per his orders, I'm also attending to household chores, besides my regular work. If you are willing to substitute for me here, you can earn two hundred rupees every month. That should be sufficient for you to live a comfortable life. What do you say?"

"No, I don't want to do any household chores," said Chinnappa. "If without such additional work I can become a policeman, do help me!"

"I think you should go and meet Devasahayam," the policeman responded. "He's running a training institute. He should be able to help you."

Chinnappa then went to the training centre and found that nearly two hundred students were learning different trades there. He explained his requirement to Devasahayam. "It's not that easy to become a policeman," remarked Devasahayam. "He should be clever enough to catch a thief. That also calls for some

physical strength and a lot of intelligence. One must be enthusiastic, too. If you are agreeable to acquiring all this, we can start your training immediately. The training will be for two years. You must attend my classes during the day and at night. I shall put you to several tests and you must pass all such tests. Only then can you aspire to become a policeman."

Chinnappa thought for a while. "Is there any method by which one can lead a comfortable life without straining much? If so, please teach me that!" he pleaded with Devasahayam.

Devasahayam by now could guess what Chinnappa's problem exactly was. "There's a wealthy gentleman here called Gajapati," he told the lazy-bones. "If you'll keep him company for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, telling him stories, he'll give you ten rupees every day. Why don't you go and see him?"

Chinnappa straight away went to Gajapati, who was so fat he had to lie down on a cot all the time. Chinnappa offered to tell him stories in the morning and evening, for two hours each. Gajapati was glad that someone had really come forward to keep him awake with stories. Fortunately,



he liked the stories Chinnappa told him. And the lazy youth was happy because he did not have to exert himself a wee bit. When he was not telling stories, he could also go and sleep if he so wished. He thought he could enjoy such comfortable life for long. But that was not to be.

"I like your stories, Chinnappa!" said Gajapati one day. "But I'm afraid you can't stay here for ever. You won't be able to continue telling me your stories!"

Chinnappa was now worried. "Why, aren't you able to pay me my salary any more?"

"No, it's not that!" Gajapati ex-

plained. "I've amassed enough wealth for seven generations to come. I won't suffer from any want of money. In fact, my wealth has been my greatest enemy! I didn't have to exert myself all my life till now. So, I became lazy and my friends left me. I grew fat and fatter and was dogged by diseases. Doctors advised me to reduce my fat. And that could be done only by cutting down on my food. Nowadays, I take only a cup of gruel as per my doctor's advice. And often I go hungry. That's the time I want to forget myself, by listening to stories. I feel I've been able to reduce my fat and soon I'll be very tired and I won't have a need to listen to stories any more. Then I'll also have to send you away!"

Chinnappa took a good look at Gajapati. "Do you say you've grown lean?" he asked his nephew sarcastically.

"You should have seen me a

month ago!" said Gajapati. "I was then very fat. I was unable to move my limbs. Now I can even walk. In another two or three days, I propose to attend to some work. You know what? I'll water the plants in my compound, morning and evening. That is what the doctor has advised me to do."

"Watering the plants?" exclaimed Chinnappa. "But you'll tire you."

"True," said Gajapati. "But I want to exert myself that way. Only then will I become strong enough to attend to more strenuous work. Health is one's real wealth. That alone will make me happy."

Chinnappa now understood the import of what Gajapati told him. He went back to Periyaswami and looked after the plants and trees in his house. He was no longer considered a lazy-bones.



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

A Hunter Among Birds

At the start of international sports events, *doves* are released to signify global peace; *pigeons* were once—in some countries ~~now~~ now—commonly used for carrying messages and mail; *parrots* ~~are~~ taught to imitate human voice ~~and~~ speech; and *falcons* are trained for hunting other birds. As a bird of prey, the falcon is nonpareil. In flight, it looks magnificent and can swoop down at tremendous speeds ~~and~~ catch its prey unawares. These birds are believed ~~to~~ attain an incredible speed of 280 km per hour—thanks to their streamlined body and pointed wings.

Popularly, known in India as *shaheen*, the bird has given birth to the competitive game of falconry, once popular with the royalty. The birds seize their prey in mid-air and takes it to a safe high perch, before it is first divested of its feathers and then eaten.

There are nearly 60 species of falcons in the world, with their characteristic sharp 'tooth' on the upper mandible. The *shaheen* is broad-shouldered, with a black head and rather prominent cheek-stripes. Below, it is either pinky white or a rusty red. Some have a black bar on the abdomen.

Falcons select inaccessible crags to build their nests, and invariably use the same nesting site year after year. The female, larger than the male bird, lays three or four pale brick-red eggs ~~at~~ a time.





INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE

India is a great country which has nurtured so many languages and many cultures through the ages. Each major language of India has a rich literature. We know more or less about the great books of the past. But we know little about the outstanding books of our own times. In these pages, **Chandamama** will tell you the stories of the novels of our age, written in different Indian languages. The narration will be very brief, but we hope, this will inspire readers to read the full book in original or in translation in the future.

--Editor

ABOUT THE SAD PLIGHT OF WOMEN

Puro, a girl in her mid-teens, was dreaming of her marriage with Ram Chand of the neighbouring village when, one day, she was suddenly kidnapped by Rashid, a Muslim youth. This was in a village in Punjab before India was divided.

Rashid's forefathers had been ruined by Puro's forefathers, who were moneylenders. Rashid wanted to avenge the injustice.

Living like a prisoner for some days, one night Puro gave her captor the slip and returned home.

But a far greater shock awaited her. Puro was a Hindu. She



abducted by a Muslim. How could her parents now accept her? The society would not be kind to them if they did!

Puro went out into the streets and was taken back by Rashid. They got married and shifted to another village.

Puro's younger sister was married to Ram Chand. Ram Chand's younger sister, Lajo, married to Puro's younger brother.

But Puro had no chance of meeting them. Puro had a new name now — Hamida. Her husband, Rashid, was kind to her. They had a son. Years rolled by.

Then came the partition of India. There were riots. Hindus and Muslims killed each other in different parts of the subcontinent. The part of Punjab to which Puro belonged fell into the share of Pakistan. The Hindus were hounded out of their homes. They took shelter in a big house. Some hooligans set fire to it. But the police arrived on time to extinguish the fire and save the people. But not before three of them were charred to death. The Hindus were led towards India, while three skeletons lay behind.

The refugee Hindus halted for a night, under the police protection, in Puro's village. Puro met Ram Chand, the man she was to marry! She learnt that Ram-Chand's sister, Lajo, who had married her brother, was missing.

The refugees left for India the next day, but Puro kept up her search for Lajo. She located the beautiful but emaciated girl in the house of an old widow whose son had determined to marry her.

Puro inspired her husband, Rashid, to kidnap the girl at dead of night. Both Puro and Rashid led the girl to her husband who was Puro's brother Ram Chand.

This was a moment when Puro herself too could escape to India with her brother Ram Chand. In fact, her brother wanted her to do that.

But no, Puro stuck on to her husband who, over the years, had been decent towards her, though once he had snatched her from her family by force.

The novel *Pinjar* (skeleton) in Punjabi by Amrita Pritam, a winner of the Sahitya Akademi and Jnanpith Awards, is a moving story of the sad plight of women — who are often reduced to skeletons under brutality and exploitation. The title is symbolic, because it shows the society stripped to its skeleton.



DO YOU KNOW?

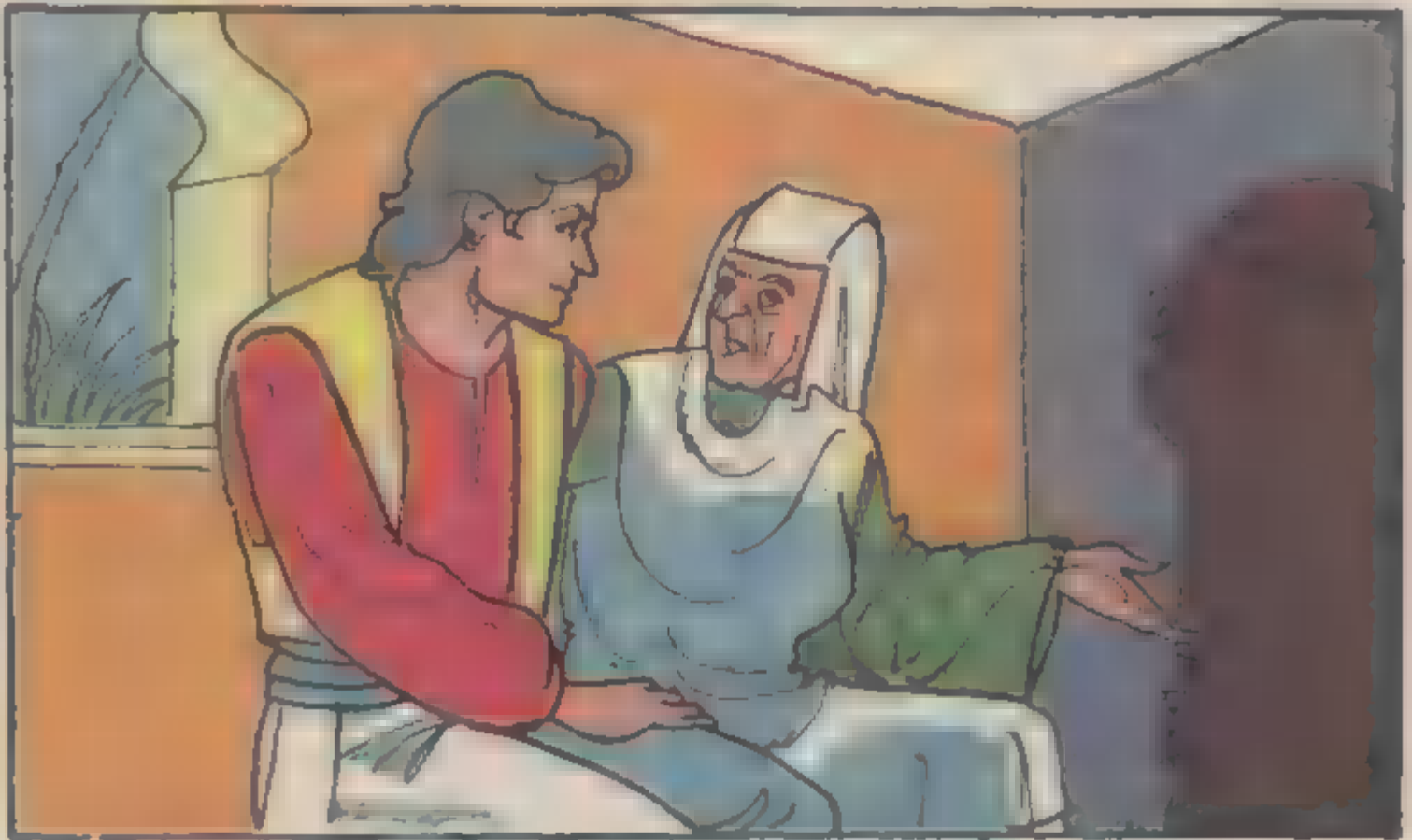
1. When one of them dies, the Christians wear black dress as a sign of mourning. What is the mourning dress of the Chinese?
2. The Gateway of India in Bombay was erected to honour a king. Which king?
3. Among British monarchs, Queen Victoria had the longest rule. How long did she rule?
4. Kabuki is a popular form of dance-drama of which country?
5. One state in the U.S.A. was the first colony to declare independence but the last to ratify the U.S. constitution. Name the State.
6. Australia, as we know of it today, is just about 200 years old. Which Australian city was made the first prison colony in 1788 by the British?
7. One of the African nations has been an independent country for nearly 2,000 years. Which country?
8. Some 2,400 years ago, a Greek philosopher was executed. Who was he?
9. Who was the publisher of India's first newspaper, *Bengal Gazette*?
10. Who was the first emperor of China?
11. Which is the coldest place on the earth?
12. Sir Isaac Pitman is credited with a system of writing. What is it called?
13. What is the name of the Persian architect who designed the Taj Mahal?
14. Which nation gave voting rights to women first?
15. Which capital city has the highest location in the world?
16. What is the name of the first woman who travelled into space?
17. How much difference is there between metre gauge and broad gauge?
18. Where is the famous Sun Temple in India located?
19. Who are all called the 'Trinity' of Carnatic music?
20. Where does the Brahmaputra empty itself?

ANSWERS

1. Pure white
2. King George V of England
3. 63 years—1837 to 1901
4. Japan
5. Rhode Island
6. Sydney
7. Ethiopia
8. Socrates
9. James Augustus Hickey
10. Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan
11. Vostok Station in Antarctica, where the temperature goes as far below as minus 123 degrees Celsius
12. Shorthand
13. Urad Isa
14. New Zealand, in 1893.
15. Capital of Bolivia—La Paz
16. Valentina Tereshkova
17. Metre gauge measures exactly one metre, while broad gauge is 1.676 metres (5 ft 6 inches).
18. In Konark, Orissa
19. Thyagaraja, Shyama Shastri, and Muthuswami Dikshitar
20. Into the Bay of Bengal—at Noakhali—after joining the Ganga

From Many Lands (Turkmenistan)

THE MERCHANT MEETS HIS MATCH



Once upon a time there lived in a little hamlet a mother and her son, Mustafa. By and by the woman became old and weak and could no longer work as before.

"My son," she said one day, "I've lost my strength and cannot labour anymore. You've grown into a smart young lad. Go out into the world and try to earn your daily bread."

So, the next day, Mustafa

went out for the neighbouring town. He looked for work everywhere and knocked on many doors. But alas, nowhere could he find a job until, finally, he met a very rich merchant who agreed to hire him.

Days passed, but the merchant did not assign any work to Mustafa. However, he fed him well and paid him regularly. This seemed rather strange to the boy.

"Master," he asked one day, "don't you have any work for

me?"

"Yes, I do have something for you. It is very important. You'll accompany me when I go out on business tomorrow," replied the merchant.

The following morning, the merchant ordered Mustafa to get ready with two camels. One of them was to carry six large empty sacks and the hide of a buffalo slaughtered just a few hours ago. The master mounted the other camel and they set out on their journey, Mustafa walking behind the camels.

They crossed the vast windy desert and stopped at the foot of a very high mountain. So tall was

it and so rough its rocks that it looked impossible to ascend it. Now the merchant asked his servant to unroll the hide and spread it inside out and lie on it.

"But why should I do this, Master?" Mustafa asked.

"Obey me, or else I'll chop off your head," threatened the merchant, fiddling with the hilt of his sword.

So, poor Mustafa did as he was told and lay on the buffalo skin. His master once rolled the hide into a bundle with the young lad inside it, tied it tightly and waited there, hiding himself behind a bush.

The buffalo skin was raw and



its smell was still very fresh and strong. This attracted a host of birds of prey. They swooped down on it at lightning speed and carried off the bundle to their nest on top of the hill. It was soon ripped open but when Mustafa, who till then did not know what was happening, stood up and gave a loud cry, the birds got frightened and flew away. He looked down and saw his master and the two camels. They seemed very tiny indeed.

The merchant, sighting him from below, shouted very loudly, "Now just pick up the stones lying there in front of you and throw them down to me."

Mustafa found precious stones of many hues strewn all over the place. There were chunks of diamond, rubies, sapphires and emeralds sparkling in the sunlight. So, he gathered them and dropped them to his master who began to fill his empty bags.

Suddenly, a doubt flashed in his mind. His face turned white with nervousness.

"Master, how can I come down?" he asked in a trembling voice.

"First let these sacks be full!



Then I'll tell you how to descend," replied the merchant with a sly look.

The poor boy, without the least suspicion continued his work. When the bags were full, the merchant filled his large pockets, too. Then hoisting the sacks onto the backs of the camels he mounted the other.

"Goodbye, boy. Thank you for your service. Now I leave you to your destiny, as I've done to all my previous employees," he said with a laugh as he rode away.

Mustafa now realised what a wicked trick the merchant had



played on him. Alas, it was too late now to regret that account. He looked around him at the bones and shreds of clothes amongst the shining precious stones. They must have belonged to those who were employed by the merchant before him. Should he also perish like them? It dawned on him, too, how the merchant had been growing richer year after year sacrificing innocent lives one after another.

It was also clear to him that no one knew about this mountain with precious stones except the merchant. Those who came to

know never descended from the top of the hill. But how the merchant had the knowledge of it seemed to be a mystery.

The precipice was too steep with razor-like edges on all sides. It looked impossible to climb down. Mustafa felt thirsty and hungry. But the flat surface before him was arid; not even a green blade of grass was visible anywhere. The blazing sun beat down on him and he felt faint.

Suddenly he remembered what his mother used to tell him when he was a little boy: "Dear son, whenever you are in difficulty, quieten yourself and pray ardently." So Mustafa came down on his knees, looked up, and began to pray and he prayed very ardently indeed.

Specks of black circled in the blue sky. They were the large feathered creatures who had their nests on top of the hill. All of a sudden, one of them swooped downwards almost brushing past Mustafa's head. Spontaneously, he gripped tightly the bird's extended legs. The great hawk rose once again with tremendous speed and with it rose Mustafa, too. As the bird was flying

nearer to a tree, Mustafa loosened his grip and managed to cling to its branches. Relieved of its burden, the hawk rose lightly and disappeared in the sky.

It was a tall tree of dates. Hungry and exhausted, Mustafa consumed the delicious fruit. Now feeling better and energetic, he slid down its round trunk and walked homewards, saved from a terrible death.

He recounted to his old mother all his adventures. She heard him with tears in her eyes and then knelt down and prayed in gratitude.

A few years passed. One day, Mustafa met the merchant in the

market-square. An idea struck him and going up to his former master he asked, "Sir, do you need a servant to help you in your work?"

The merchant did not recognise him. For, how could anyone left on the mountain-top return alive? And Mustafa, too, had changed in his appearance in course of time. So he was hired again.

Soon, they made their way to the foot of the same hill, with the camels; the buffalo hide and the empty sacks. Mustafa asked the merchant before to stretch himself on the skin. He pretended to be a fool and said, "Master, I do not understand a thing! How is it to



be done? Could you please show it to me?"

"You seem to be a good-for-nothing fellow! Look here, this is how it is to be done," said the merchant and laid ~~the~~ the hide and wrapped it around himself.

Mustafa did not lose a moment and tightly strapped and tied the merchant in the buffalo skin. Before his master could react, the large eagles flew down and one of them seized the bundle with its sharp claws and flew up to its nest on top of the mountain. It tore open the hide, but finding a human being alive and breathing, left him alone. The merchant stood up stunned, and looked down.

"Come on, Master! Now throw down the precious stones and I'll fill up the empty bags. I had done this for you not very long ago. Have you forgotten?" said Mustafa with a grin.

The merchant now recognised his old employee. He began trembling with rage. "How did... did you descend the mountain?" he asked nervously.

"Yes, yes I'll tell you. But not before you gather the precious stones and pass them over to me. Let me fill these large bags!" said Mustafa in a jovial strain.

The master, for a change, had no other go, but to obey. The sacks were soon full. The young ~~man~~ hoisted them onto the camel's back. He then mounted the other and said, "Merchant, what do you think happened to all your workers whom you sent to the top of this steep precipice? Did they know how to come down?" asked Mustafa and, bidding goodbye, rode away.

It was impossible to descend the hill. But like Mustafa, did the merchant know how to pray?
—Retold by Anup Kishore Das





NO LONGER A GOD HIMSELF

Sher Singh was the ruler of a small state; but he thought himself to be ■ King Emperor. At times, he used to be very cruel, and people hated him, describing him as a veritable tiger (sher). The kind of punishment he gave them at the slightest pretext made him fearsome. Some people thought, the best way to escape his wrath ■■ to worship him like ■ god! He had already grown very arrogant. And when people flattered him by calling him a god, he quickly assumed himself to be one!

One day, ■ sage arrived in the kingdom from the Himalayas where he had been meditating for several years. People flocked to listen to his discourses and benefited from his teachings. They discarded all evil thoughts and decided ■■ to indulge in evil deeds as well. Word about the sage and of the crowds

that he was attracting soon reached the ears of Sher Singh, who became very jealous of the sage.

His spies even carried the message that the sage was now mentioning of gods with names other than that of Sher Singh! He angrily ordered that the sage be bound and brought to him.

With fire spitting from his eyes, Sher Singh asked him, "Do you know who I am? I am the king of this land, nay, the emperor of the whole universe. My subjects worship me as ■ god. How then do you dare tell them of other gods? For that matter, how did you step into my kingdom without my permission? You've committed ■ grave crime. I shall punish you for that."

The sage merely smiled. "Your Majesty, I'm told that you've some ministers who are very clever and knowledgeable. May I put to them

one simple question? After I get their answers, you may give me whatever punishment you wish to [redacted] me."

"You may go ahead and ask your question to my ministers here!" Sher Singh [redacted] his consent. The sage took three palm leaves and wrote on each of them: "What is dust?" He handed the palm leaves to three ministers who were present in the durbar. After they wrote their answers, the sage collected the palm leaves. The king [redacted] eager to hear the answers.

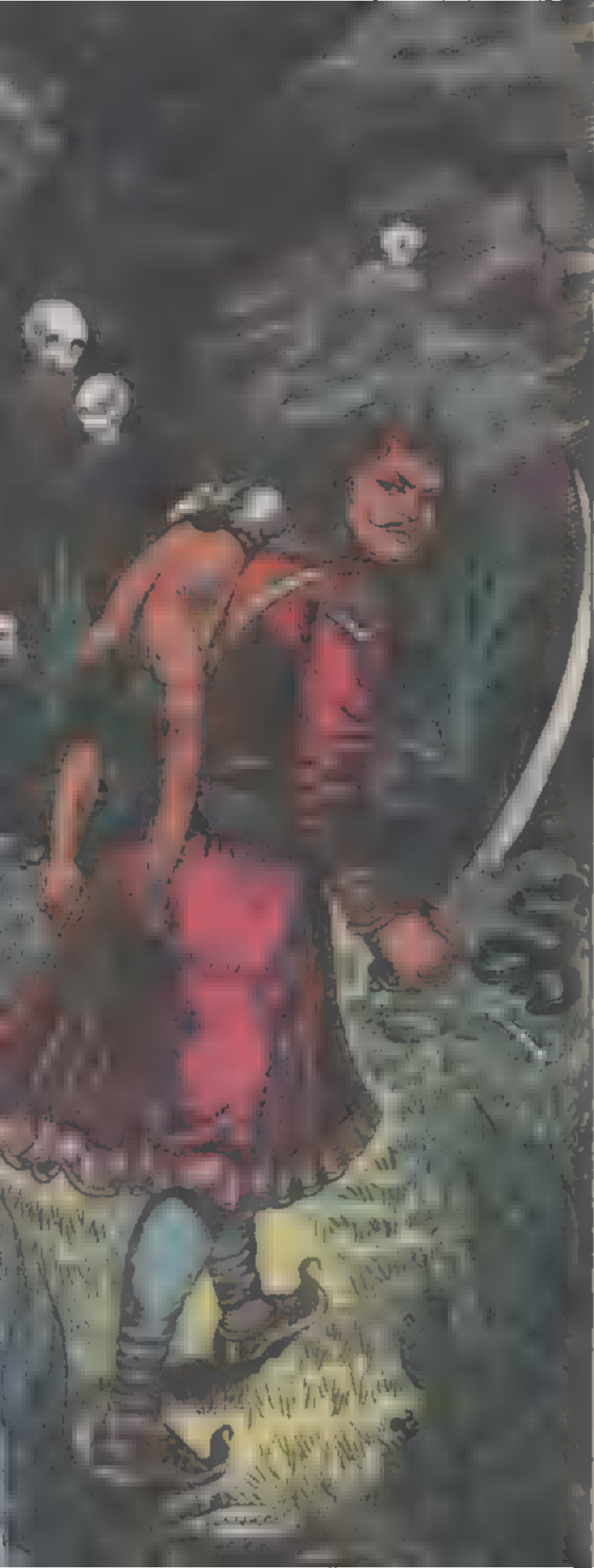
The [redacted] [redacted] palm leaf and read: "The entire universe is full of dust." He took another leaf. "Dust [redacted] different from water." The sage [redacted] took the third leaf [redacted] read out: "All living beings come from dust and when they die, they become dust."

The sage now turned to the king. "Your Majesty, I had asked them a simple question. But all three of them have given different answers. And you call them knowledgeable! If I have described god in a different way to the people, do you think I have done anything wrong? God can [redacted] described in several ways!"

Sher Singh felt ashamed. He got down from his throne and prostrated before the sage. "O revered one! Please forgive me for my ignorance and arrogance. I've all along been blind; you've now opened my eyes! Please accept me as your disciple."

The sage blessed Sher Singh and stayed with him for several days, giving him a lot of advice. The king [redacted] no longer a cruel ruler and his subjects [redacted] loved him.





New Tales of King Vikram 
the Vampire

A King is Different

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. And I don't know why! Sometimes people feel, what they're doing is right and may



care little for the views of others. They may like to show off their cleverness, without realising that their action is unwise. Let me explain this to you by narrating ■ story." The vampire then began his narration.

Long ago, Dayasimha ruled the kingdom of Dharmapuri. ■ had ■ only sister and was very much attached to her. When it ■ time for her marriage, he found ■ suitor for her ■ performed their wedding on ■ grand scale. Sad to say, after giving birth to ■ baby girl, she passed away, plunging the king into

uncontrollable grief. He thought, the only way he could get some consolation would be by taking ■ of the baby himself. For which he sought the permission of the baby's father, his brother-in-law, who readily gave his consent.

Dayasimha gave all his affection to the baby. He named her Mekhala and brought her up along with his ■ son, Jaisimha. He decided that he would ask him to marry Mekhala when the time ■ for their marriage. Before ■ realised it, the king found that the two had reached marriageable age and wished to perform their marriage at the earliest.

One day, he called Jaisimha by his side ■ revealed his wish to him. The Prince told his father that he ■ not keen on marrying Mekhala. "She doesn't have the qualities to become my queen. Please don't insist on my marrying her, father!"

King Dayasimha was taken aback. "What did you say? You won't marry Mekhala? What does she lack in? You both have grown up here alike. Tell me, who else is ■ qualified than

she?"

"There's someone more qualified, father, you may not know that!" said Jaisimha. "She is Shobhana, daughter of our commander. She is very clever and has all the qualities to make a suitable bride for me. I wish to marry only her."

"Oh! Shobhana?" remarked Dayasimha. "How's she better qualified than our Mekhala? She is equally beautiful and carries herself gracefully. What more have you seen in Shobhana?"

"Please bear with me, father," said Jaisimha very calmly. "Right now, if I were to say anything, it will not carry weight with you. I know you love Mekhala, as she is your sister's daughter. Because of your affection for her, you're not able to see the shortcomings in her. So, let's not talk of our marriage any more now."

King Dayasimha exercised patience and when an opportunity came, he did broach the subject with his son once or twice. However, he found that Jaisimha was bent upon marrying Shobhana, and none else. The king was afraid that his son's



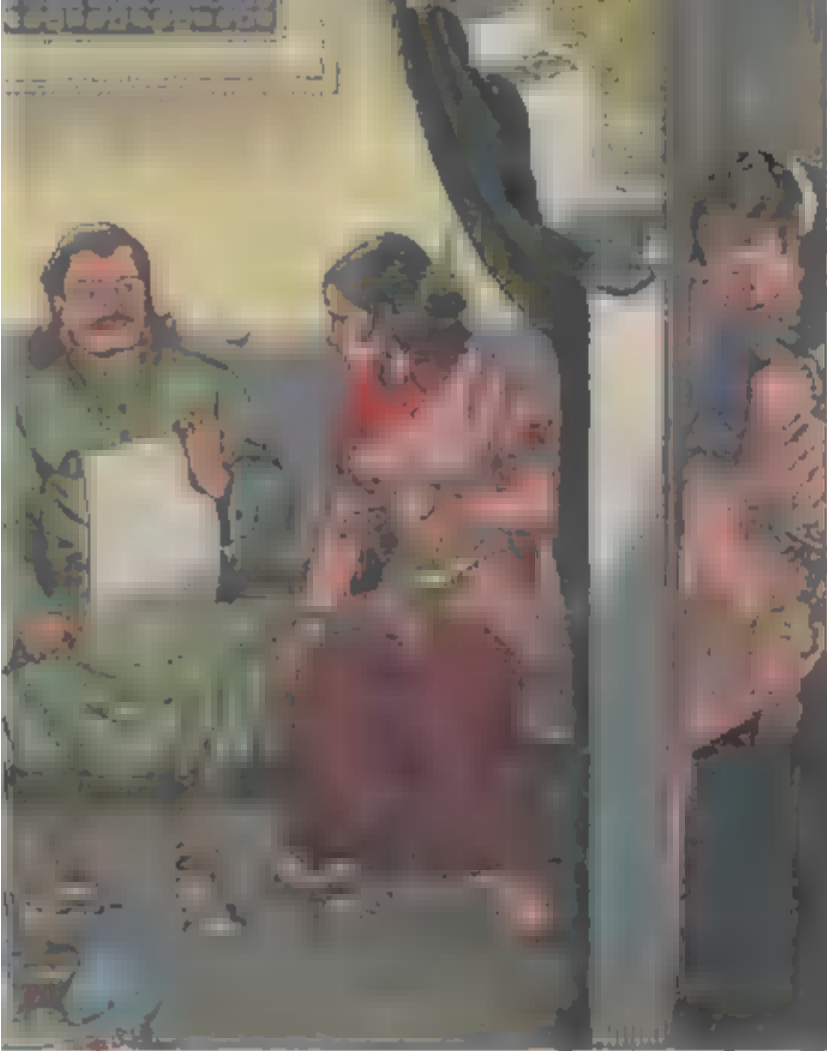
attitude might cause misery to Mekhala.

Another day, he called Jaisimha and once again pleaded with him. "My son, why should you be so adamant? It's causing me unnecessary tension. What exactly is your intention?"

Prince Jaisimha realised how much agony his father was passing through. "Father, I've thought of a way out of the problem you're facing."

"What's the solution? Tell me," said Dayasimha keenly.

"Father, I shall tell you a story," said Jaisimha. "You may



in turn narrate the story to both Mekhala and Shobhana and ask them to answer the questions raised in that story. You'll then be able to decide who's better qualified among the two."

Dayasimha called the two girls and narrated the story. "Suvarnapuri was once ruled by Somasekhar. He had two wives, Swarnalata and Hemalata. Swarnalata sometimes used to doubt whether the king was not more affectionate towards his second wife, whom he used to take out for picnics and royal functions; Hemalata was even allowed to

accompany the king whenever he went for hunting. At that time, she would put on male attire. Swarnalata did not approve of or appreciate all this. Though Hemalata was the junior queen, it was clear that the king was showing much preference to her. Swarnalata was sad."

Dayasimha continued the story: "One day, Swarnalata decided that she, too, would put on male attire and go with her husband to the forest. 'I too can ride a horse and shoot arrows from a bow,' she told Somasekhar, and he was about to give expression to his surprise on seeing her in male dress. 'I'm going with you today. Please take me.' The king could not control his laughter. Actually, he did not deliberately discriminate between his wives; he was equally affectionate to them. 'As you wish, my queen. You may go with me,' he told her lovingly.

"While hunting, the king and queen got separated from their entourage. As they tried to find their way back, they came upon some huts occupied by tribals. Somasekhar and Swarnalata entered one of the huts. There

was a lone young woman in the hut. She received the two visitors with ■■■ courtesy and respect, went inside and brought two plates containing something to eat. 'This is one of our specialities. I hope you'll like it.' She placed the plates in front of them. Somasekhar smiled ■■■ ate it. Swarnalata took ■ bit and put it into her mouth. She did ■■■ like its taste at all. She looked ■ her husband who was, however, eating the stuff with relish.

"The king emptied the plate. 'It's quite nice. Could I have some honey to go with it?' he asked the queen. She brought honey and served it to her guests.

When they got up to go, she bid them an affectionate farewell. Before they went away, Swarnalata had managed to ask the ~~husband~~ the recipe of the delicacy she had given them.

"A few days later, the king happened to go to the chambers of the senior queen. She brought for him something to eat in a golden plate. 'Here! Your favourite delicacy!' said Swarnalata. The king guessed that it was the same stuff that he had eaten at the young tribal woman's hut. Without eating it, he took off his pearl necklace and adorned his queen with it. 'I am convinced of your love for me,' said Somase-





khari. 'However, I really feel you should not ■ with me to the forest. You should remain in the palace; that's the place for you.' Swarnalata was sad ■ well as happy. She remained silent."

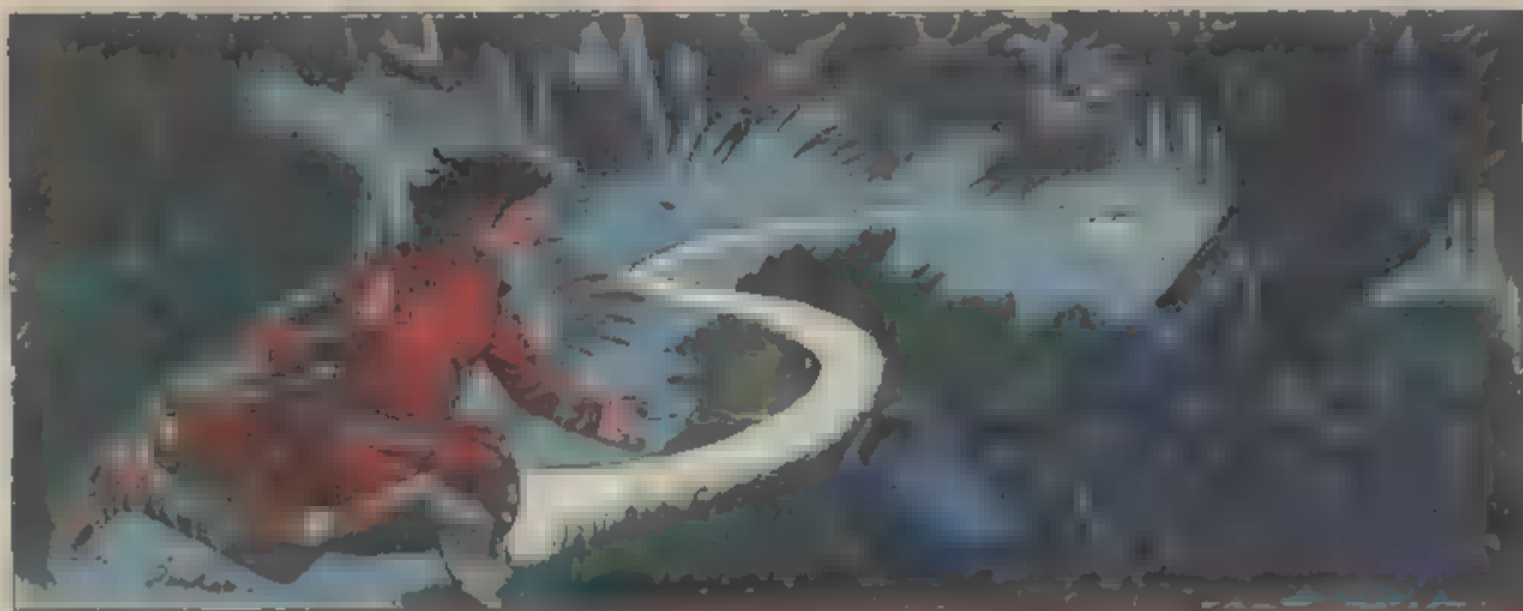
King Dayasimha concluded the story and looked at Mekhala and Shobhana. "I've ■ doubt. I feel that the king was not equally affectionate to his two wives. What do you say?"

"King Somasekhar was *not* right in his attitude," observed Mekhala. "He shouldn't have discriminated them. He was more loving towards Hemalata."

Shobhana had ■ different opinion. "The king was absolutely right," she said, adding, "his decision was wise and practical." King Dayasimha listened to them carefully. He did not give any opinion then. A month later, he conducted the wedding of Jayasimha and Shobhana and asked his son to take over the reins of the kingdom.

The vampire ended his narration thus and turned to King Vikramaditya. "How did Dayasimha find Shobhana's answer satisfactory and acceptable? Was it right ■ his part to have married off Shobhana to his son? Was it because of his anxiety about Jaisimha's future that he wanted to make Shobhana his daughter-in-law? If you fail to answer my questions, be aware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

Vikramaditya thought for a while before answering him. "There's ■ lot of difference between the ruler of the land and an ordinary householder. For the king, the entire country is his family. A householder need worry only about his own family. The king's duties are different.



When the tribal [redacted] gave him something to eat, it [redacted] his duty to make her happy by eating it even though it might not be to [redacted] taste. That [redacted] what Somasekhar did. Swarnalata did not understand this. If Hemalata [redacted] been with the king [redacted] that time, she would have realised its significance. She would have praised her husband. That's why the king diplomatically told Swarnalata [redacted] remain in the palace. A wife may like [redacted] have her husband's company always, but when [redacted] happens to be [redacted] king, he'll have to

look after the welfare of everybody. King Dayasimha placed Jaisimha in the shoes of King Somasekhar and concluded that Shobhana would make a better bride for him. That's why he decided to conduct their wedding. It was not an unwise decision."

The vampire knew that Vikramaditya had outwitted him again. So, he flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.

A clear conscience [redacted] no accusation.

War [redacted] a fire struck in the Devil's tinder-box.

There is no darkness but ignorance.

Sports Snippets



Razor-thin victory

The difference in points earned by the winner and runner-up in the world all-round women gymnastics that concluded in Birmingham on April 16 was just 0.007. Shannon Miller, the 16-year-old student of Oklahoma, U.S.A., got the title with 39.062 points. Romania's Gina Gogean came second with 39.055 points; Tatiana

Lisenco of Ukraine (39.011 points) placed third. Shannon Miller placed second in the all-round event at the Barcelona Olympics last year, behind Tatiana Gutsu, who then represented the Commonwealth of Independent States. Gutsu did not compete in Birmingham.

The men's all-round final was won by 23-year-old Vitali Scherbo, who totalled 56.174 points. This superstar gymnast from Belarus had won six gold medals at Barcelona. The Birmingham silver went to Sergei Charikov of Russia (55.625 points) and the bronze was won by Andreas Wecker of Germany (55.540).

500 victories

The Amelia Island Championship may not be as famous as the Wimbledon,



French Open, or the Australian Open. But this year, a match-in Amelia gave Gabriela Sabatini, of Argentina, her 500th career victory. In 1991, she had won the Amelia title itself. In this year's winning match, she beat South Africa's Joannette Kruger, to join 12 other women players in the world who have notched 500-plus victories—like Martina Navratilova; Chris Evert, Virginia Wade, Billie-Jean King, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, and Bjorn Graf.



Century of centuries

There are now 23 batsmen who have scored a hundred or more centuries in first class cricket—the 23rd one being the England captain Graham Gooch. He joined the elite group on May 1, when he scored a brisk 105 in Essex's match against Cambridge University. The 'Group 23' includes such famous names as Jack Hobbs (197 centuries), Wally Hammond (167), Len Hutton (129), W.G. Grace (126), Dennis Compton (123), Don Bradman (117), Viv Richards (113), Colin Cowdrey (107), Les Ames (102), and Dennis Amiss (102).

Clean sweep by Kenya

Italy's most popular road race—the Stramilano in Milan—this year saw the first, second, and third places go to Kenyan participants. They were Daniel Tanui, Andrew Masai, and Paul Tergat, clocking 59min. 47 seconds, 1hr. 42 seconds, and 1hr. 45 seconds respectively. Tanui's timing has been recognised as a world record for half-marathon (21.097 km), though earlier in Lisbon, Sammy Lelei had clocked 59min. 55 seconds, which was not ratified because part of the course was downhill. The world long distance (10,000 metres) record-holder, Arturo Barrios of Mexico (2.18



minutes) placed seventh. It was the fourth consecutive victory in the Stramilano for 28-year-old Tanui.

World record

John Rouse (U.S.A.) broke the 100m backstroke world record with a time of 51.43 seconds at an international invitation swim meet in Sheffield, England, on April 12. The earlier record of 52.50 seconds remained with Canada's Mark Tewksbury, set on February 23, 1992, in Winnipeg, Canada.



Pollution : An Invisible Killer

Some years ago, there was a cartoon in a British magazine showing a gentleman lying dead on the balcony of his office on the 10th floor of a building. Below was a lake. One of his colleagues was telling the other, "He wanted to commit suicide by jumping into the lake, but before he could do so, the pollution killed him."

This was, of course, an exaggeration. But the fact is pollution is cutting down the life-span of millions of people around the world by years, though we may not be aware of it. Our rivers and lakes are dangerously polluted. Air in every city is pushing poison into us. If there are factories in or around the city, the danger is grave.

Factories release their chemical waste into rivers; the smoke and gas they emit pollute the air. But we should not blame the factory-owners alone. Thousands of petrol-burning vehicles that crowd our cities, emitting smoke, are a great health hazard.

There are factories around which trees look half-dead, their leaves pale and crumbled. That is an external sign of the harm pollution is doing to our internal system, to our lungs, our blood, and to our brains as well.

Can't we do something about it?





VEER HANUMAN

(34)

(With the death of Mahiravana at the hands of Rama and Lakshmana, Ravana feels that there is now no one else on whom he can depend. He has been expecting Mahiravana to bring to him the heads of the brothers. Instead, he has been sent to death by the brothers themselves. Ravana's anguish is too much for him to bear, and he falls unconscious. When he comes to his own, he decides to go for battle himself and proceeds to propitiate Mother Kali, while the Rakshasas and soldiers carry on the fight.)

While Ravana spent his time at puja, propitiating Mother Kali, a fierce fight took place between the Asura army and the Vanara soldiers. The Rakshasas carried all sorts of weapons like daggers, swords, mace, and axe. They could not subdue the Vanara soldiers, who fought with stones and boulders, and huge trees and their stout branches. Neither

side was lacking in courage or strength.

Sree Rama gave cover to the Vanaras by sending shower after shower of arrows at the Asuras, many of whom fell down dead. The Vanaras were full of excitement as they watched Rama preventing the Rakshasa soldiers from advancing towards the Vanaras. They

Ravana on the battle-field



unable to see what kind of arrow he was selecting for his powerful bow or when he was actually releasing it. He was that fast in action and everything was happening in split seconds. They could only see the arrows heading towards the Asura army and hitting the enemy from all sides. Some Rakshasas fled from the battle-field when they saw their friends falling ■ prey to Rama's arrows. They could not also stand the cries and shouts or agony as their friends fell down.

The whole city of Lanka was shocked beyond belief when they were told that thousands of

Rakshasas had met with their end. The womenfolk wailed, without knowing whether their sons, brothers and husbands were still alive or had fallen on the battle-field. Their ire turned towards Ravana. "It's all due to that wretched woman Soorpanakha!" some of them were heard cursing Ravana's sister. "She is jealous of Sita as she was unable to make Rama her husband. And it was she who instigated Ravana to kidnap Sita. And did she earn anything! Instead, we have incurred the wrath of Rama! And nobody has been able to overpower him or defeat him in war. It's only Ravana's sons and brothers who lost their lives. Was he able to marry Sita? She wouldn't even look at his face! Wonder how many more families will be ruined, all because of his unwise act!" The women beat their chests aloud in despair.

The women's loud wailings woke Ravana from his deep meditation. He came out and looked through the window, only to see Rakshasa soldiers falling an easy prey to Rama's shower of arrows. He was furious at the sight. "My brother Kumbhakarna, son Indrajit and Commander Prahastha were all repositories of my power and strength!" he said

with a heavy sigh. "They have been killed by Rama and Lakshmana, and until I send them to hell myself, my anger will not be appeased. I have delayed this till now, and that was my fault. If I had killed them in the beginning itself, I could have saved the precious lives of my brothers and sons. I should not delay the fight any longer; I'm starting straight away," he said to the hearing of Mahodara and Mahaparswara who were with him then.

Ravana boarded a chariot drawn by eight horses. He drove straight where the Vanara army was fighting. He was escorted by Mahodara, Mahaparswara, and Viroopaksha. All of them together confronted the Vanara soldiers. Just as Rama and Lakshmana were sending Rakshasa soldiers to their end, Ravana and his commanders began annihilating the Vanara soldiers. On seeing this, Sugriva sent Sushena to go and protect them. Afterwards he himself faced the Rakshasas, who fell down like fireflies.

Viroopaksha now got on to an elephant and challenged the Vanara army. Sugriva prevented him from getting among the Vanara formations. Viroopaksha then sent arrows against Sugriva, who decided to kill



him and grabbed a huge tree. He hit Viroopaksha's elephant with one mighty sweep, and the animal fell down dead unable to bear the pain. Viroopaksha jumped down to the ground and faced Sugriva with a drawn sword. Their fight was fierce. Just for a moment, Viroopaksha took it easy and Sugriva grabbed that moment and hit him on the nose. Blood came out in torrents and soon Viroopaksha breathed his last.

On hearing the news of his death, Ravana sent Mahodara to engage the Vanara soldiers. That was the beginning of his own end. He did not spare a single Vanara soldier in



front of him. As he advanced, he was checked by Sugriva, who first killed the horses drawing Mahodara's chariot. Mahodara caught hold of a mace and confronted Sugriva. The mace did not tire Sugriva. He grabbed the mace and broke it into a thousand pieces. He then hit Mahodara with his fist. Mahodara hit back. Their fight thus continued for a long time. Mahodara's sword got entangled in Sugriva's mace. He strained to release it. Sugriva made use of this opportunity and beheaded Mahodara in a trice.

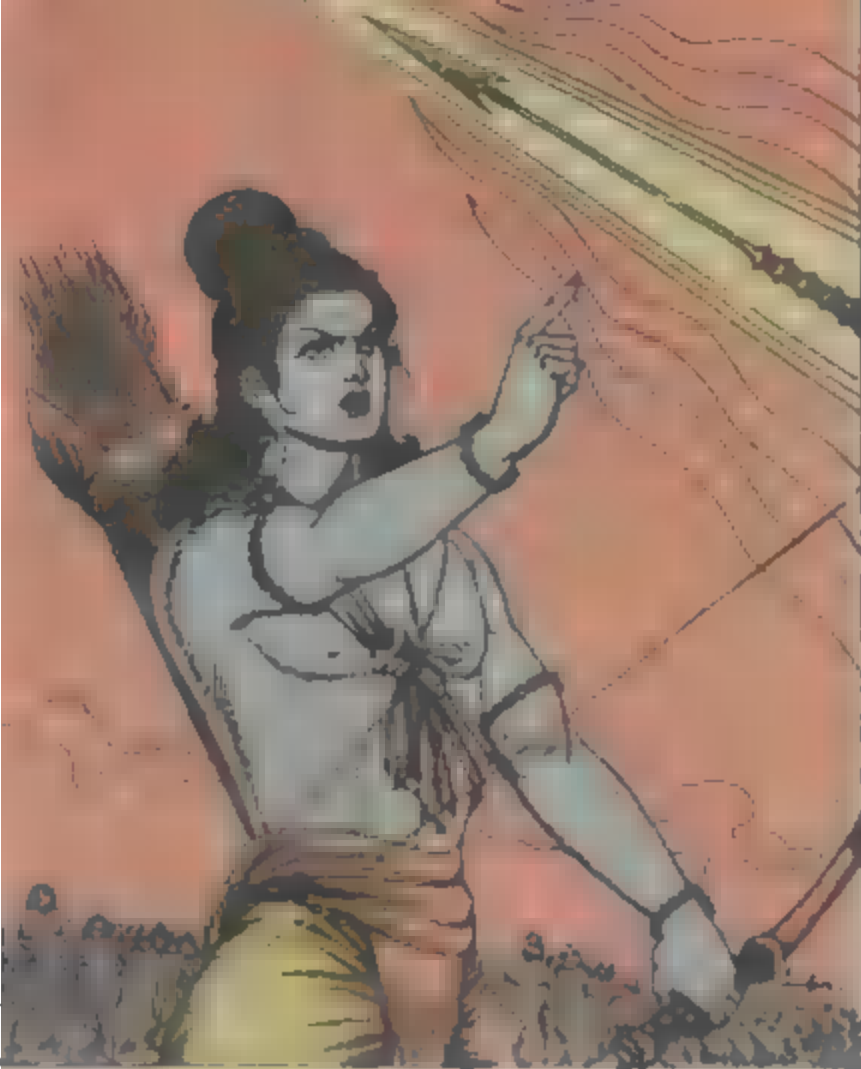
At that very moment,

Mahaparswa and Angada were fighting with each other. The Vanara soldiers were unable to go anywhere near to give any help to Angada who, however, succeeded in pushing Mahaparswa out of his chariot. Gavaksha and Parsara rained stones on the chariot, killing all the four horses.

Mahaparswa soon got up and engaged Kasha and Jambava in fight. Angada came back with a huge boulder and aimed it at Mahaparswa who cleverly dodged and avoided being hit. But at the next opportunity, Angada hit him on the chest. That was the end of Mahaparswa.

Ravana was all the while watching the fight that his commanders gave to the Vanara army. He now decided to face Rama and kill him in battle, rather than kill the Vanara soldiers. Only a victory over Rama would bring glory to him, he thought. And if he were to kill Rama, the Vanara army would lose its morale and retreat from Lanka. Ravana first sent the *dhama* arrow which scared the Vanara soldiers. They ran helter-skelter. Rama was isolated and that was what Ravana was waiting for. It was now clear that the war had reached its climax and Rama and Ravana would face each other.





Lakshmana joined his brother.

It was Lakshmana who first sent arrows at Ravana to begin the fight to finish. Ravana met his arrows by his own arrows in mid-air. Before Lakshmana chose his next arrow, Ravana aimed his [redacted] [redacted] Rama who succeeded in deflecting them. The fight continued for long.

When Ravana found [redacted] [redacted] of his arrows was hitting Rama, he sent the [redacted] arrow. Rama met it with the *agneya* arrow, much to the surprise of Ravana. Sugriva and several Vanara soldiers, who were watching the fight, shouted in joy.

Ravana sent *rudha* and Rama

broke it with *gandharva*. Ravana chose *sourapa*, which never went anywhere near Rama. All of Ravana's strategy was now coming to nought. The fight prolonged. Ravana was getting tired and he found that he had sustained injuries, too. On the other hand, Rama was full of vigour for a long fight.

Lakshmana took advantage of Ravana's tiredness and sent an arrow that broke the flagstaff of Ravan's chariot. His next victim was the charioteer himself. Lakshmana then broke Ravana's bow into [redacted] thousand pieces.

Vibhishana now joined the fight and he killed all the eight horses of Ravana's chariot. Before he fell down, Ravana jumped out of the chariot. So, that arrow had come from his own brother? thought Ravana. He turned to face Vibhishana, who [redacted] then aiming another arrow [redacted] Ravana himself. He was very angry. He took out a powerful [redacted] and sent it to hit Vibhishana. But Lakshmana succeeded in breaking it in mid-air.

Ravana's anger now turned to Lakshmana. He chose another arrow [redacted] and aimed it [redacted] the brothers. Before it left the bow, Lakshmana shot it off Ravana's bow. He fol-

lowed this with a shower of arrows. Ravana was unable to move this way or that. He stood stockstill. "You Lakshmana!" he shouted. "You succeeded in stopping me—but only for a moment. Do you know that I can immobilise every part of your body? You still don't know me well!" Ravana sent an arrow which really fell Lakshmana. He fell down unconscious. Rama was worried. He was furious with Ravana, who continued to send arrows after arrows at Rama. He wished there would be some respite so that he could attend on Lakshmana. He called out to Sugriva, Angada, and Hanuman: "Look after Lakshmana! Let me see to the end of Ravana!"

However, Rama found himself unable to move forward, as he very much wished to remain with his brother. Sushena noticed Rama's dilemma. "Please don't worry about your brother," he reassured Rama. "His life is not in danger. We're with him and he'll soon come to his own." He turned to Hanuman. "You must once again go to the Himalayas and bring the herbs that would help Lakshmana regain consciousness."

Hanuman started for the Himalayas immediately. When he



reached there, he realised he had forgotten the particular plant Sushena was mentioning. He searched everywhere and then decided that he would better carry the mountain itself which was full of herbal plants of different kinds. He placed the mountain in front of Sushena. "I was unable to locate the particular plant. So, here's the mountain itself!"

"That's wise of you, Hanuman!" Sushena complimented him. "Good thing you didn't come back empty-handed!" He then picked up whatever herbs he wanted and prepared a medicine from them. He slowly put



few drops into Lakshmana's nose. Everybody watched the exercise with anxiety, their eyes glued on Lakshmana. Much to their relief, Lakshmana soon woke up. There was a smile on everybody's face.

Rama was the happiest of all. He now felt enthused to continue the battle with Ravana. He found that Ravana had changed his chariot and was ~~now~~ longer on the ground, while he himself was standing in front of him.

Lord Indra, who was watching all this from heaven, called his charioteer, Matali. "Take my chariot to

Rama!" When Matali brought down the chariot and placed it in front of Rama, everyone was overjoyed. The chariot was a glittering piece.

"Lord Indra has asked me to convey his good wishes to you, Rama," said Matali. "He has sent his own chariot for your use. Also, his armour, bow and arrows, and other weapons. Please board the chariot. I shall myself be your charioteer. Victory is ~~now~~ our side!"

Rama got into Indra's chariot, and Matali drove it to where Rama guided it. War started once again.

- To continue

Good to begin well, but better to end well.

Guilt conscience ~~makes~~ men cowards.

There lives more faith in honest doubt.



What ■ meant by imperialism? How ■ it begin?

—Nandita and Pavithra, Bangalore

History tells us of kings who annexed other countries and enlarged their kingdoms to create empires; and they came ■ ■ known ■ emperors. The word *imperialism* has its origin in emperors and empires; though it has a modern connotation—to mean the attempt by one country to dominate others by direct rule. Such countries were known as colonies. India was ■ ■ colony of 'Great' Britain, which began conquering or colonizing various territories from the 17th century. By the end of World War I, the British empire was the largest with more than 25 per cent of world's population and area under its rule. Political imperialism is almost wiped out from the world. Instead, ■ have what is called *neo-colonialism*, whereby one country exercises economic control ■ others.

When ■ "Chandamama" ■ published? ■ language? Price?

—Senapati Kshyamanidhi, Padampur

Chandamama (Telugu) and *Ambulimama* (Tamil) appeared first in 1947. They were priced 6 annas (16 annas ■ a rupee).

Did Shakespeare write "Tales from Shakespeare"?

—D.R.C. Choudary, Kasibugga

Tales from Shakespeare (published in 1807) by the brother-and-sister team, Charles ■ Mary Lamb, is a prose-narration of some of Shakespeare's famous plays.

■ which district is Muttur village, where everybody uses Sanskrit ■ everyday life?

—Bijendra Kumar, Hyderabad

Muttur is in Shimoga district of Karnataka.

Say "Hello" to text books and friends
'Cause School days ~~are~~ here again
Have a great year and all the best
From Wobbit, Coon and the rest!





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books. Time for games. Time to meet old friends.
And make new ones. Time to start studying
again. Because there's so much to learn about
the world around you.

From all of us here at Chandamama, have a
great year in school. And remember to tell us
what you've learnt everyday, when you
come home from school !



H A N D A M A M A

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Mahesjan



T.C. John

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for May '93 goes to:-

Rahul Chari,
53/C/1 Suvama,
Gokulpeth,
Nagpur- 440 010.

The winning entry: "Playful" - "Thoughtful"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Things are only worth what one makes them worth.

—Moliere

The greater the glory, the nearer it is to envy.

—Livy

Sweetness of disposition charms the soul

—Voltaire

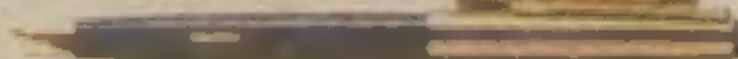


***"Glinting nib and holy cast,
Camlin do my homework fast."***

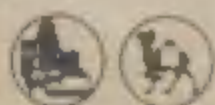


The lil' Pasha's secret – Camlin
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lots of time to play.

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